

**BUTTE COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION
Friday, January 17, 2003
Minutes**

Held at the Mira Loma Drive county offices, the meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m.

Item 1: Introductions

Commissioners present: Chair Patricia Cragar, Jane Dolan, Marian Gage, Gary House, Karen Marlatt, Linda Moore, and Gene Smith.

Commissioners absent: Vice-Chair Mark Lundberg, and Sandra Machida

Staff present: Cheryl Giscombe and Eva Puciata.

Staff absent: None.

Also present were: Carol Roberts, Valley Oak Children's Services; Heather Senske, BCOE; Helen Turner, California Child Care Resource & Referral Network; Carol Lams, OPT for Fit Kids; and Mike Ramsey and Susan Weber-Brown, Butte County District Attorney.

Item 2: Agenda Review

No changes.

Item 3: November and December 2002 Meeting Minutes

Gary House made a motion to approve as written both the November 15, 2002, and December 6, 2002 minutes. Karen Marlatt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4: Administration Committee Report

Gary House reported.

A. Funding Policy:

Policy on Special Funding Requests: Funding disbursements will go out to bid in the funding allocation categories listed in the Strategic Plan Appendix 5, except when special circumstances justify a sole source or targeted disbursement. The Commission will consider California First 5 – State Commission matching fund initiatives and other local proposals outside the formal bid process, if there is sufficient evidence of alignment with current Strategic Plan. Local proposals outside the formal bid process must submit a written proposal to the Commission, which addresses each item listed in the Policy Criteria.

Policy Criteria : The proposal must demonstrate measurable advancement of the objectives in the Strategic Plan. The proposal must indicate a compelling reason why the funds are needed sooner than normal competitive bid timelines in the Strategic Plan Appendix 5. The proposal must indicate a track record of significant success in delivering services for funds requested.

Procedures for Consideration of Special Funding Requests:

1. The entity requesting the funds must submit a written proposal that directly addresses the established criteria, indicates the amount of funds requested, and provides a scope of work including project implementation timeline.
2. The Administration Committee will review special funding proposals within a self-determined timeframe and make recommendations to the full Commission for approval or denial. The Commission cannot guarantee a specific timeframe for the decision-making process on proposals submitted outside the formal competitive bid process.

Funding Policy: The Administrative Committee was asked to handle the funding policy issue, which comes up occasionally because there are organizations/individuals approaching the Commission requesting funding. During the December 6 and January 3 meetings, the Committee outlined what they believed would be a good policy for funding requests.

The original draft language has been:

“All funding disbursements of Butte County Children & Families Commission will go out bid through a formal request for funding proposal (RFP) process. Requests for funding proposals shall be in accordance with the categories specified in the Strategic Plan.”

What is being attempted is to provide some leeway for the Commission to entertain proposals, particularly where there is a unique hardship or emergency situation.

There will be many people that will come to the Commission seeking financial support and the question is, what kind of policy/guidance would the Commission use to grant those requests or not. How do you say “no” to good programs that have gone under or are in the process of going under? Once you open the door, how do you possibly close it? How do you deal with programs that serve kids way beyond the age 5? Tough questions; hard decisions.

During the January 2003 Administrative Committee meeting, the language was revised to:

“Funding disbursements will go out to bid in the funding allocation categories as listed in the Strategic Plan, Appendix 5, except when special circumstances justify a sole source or targeted disbursement.”

Is this language definitive enough? Does it need to be revised? Or is it acceptable with the understanding that it’s somewhat vague yet still gives the Commission a lot of latitude to say “yes” or “no” to certain funding requests?

Guidelines should be established that would be helpful for people requesting funding and could help shorten the process too by letting them know what the Commission needs to help in their decision making process. These guidelines could be contained in five pages and ask such things as:

- a. What is the compelling reason for the request?
- b. What is their track record (why they feel they’re effective).
- c. Since the Commission focuses on 0 to 5, perhaps there needs to be a discussion on how the focus will be on 0 to 5. That will be difficult if not almost impossible for some excellent programs because they don’t differentiate.
- d. A budget needs to be included. If they serve more than 0 to 5, can they give the Commission a sense of how much money touches that age group?

It was decided to make those amendments/changes: include the budget, the 0 to 5 specification under policy criteria, and recognizing the current strategic plan, take out “current” and review the strategic plan as it relates to any application. The application will be brief, yet cover those items of concern, e.g., from track record to how you’re going to serve people and kids under five, etc.

A motion was made to accept the amendments. The Policy on Special Funding Requests was approved unanimously.

B. Consent Calendar:

It was recommended that the format of the agenda be revised to include a consent agenda and a regular business calendar. This would allow the Commission to be more efficient in conducting business. Historically, there’s a lot of information that comes through from either the commissioners or staff that can be identified under the consent calendar. These are items that don’t take up much time and are non-controversial. These items would come to the administration committee first, which would determine which items fall under the consent calendar and what would fall under routine business. If a commissioner felt an item needed more discussion, they could pull it from the consent agenda easily. There would be a clear distinction between items on a consent agenda and those that need to be fully discussed before the Commission.

Utilizing a Consent Agenda for identified, previously discussed non-conflictual items was approved unanimously.

C. Evaluation Recommendations:

Commissioner Gage brought up, at a prior meeting, the question of what is the Commission doing to evaluate their efforts and the need to go out to an outside evaluator? The administration commission discussed this and it was felt that it would be premature at this point to do evaluations, based on the idea that the mini-grants are probably something not subject to a lot of evaluation but rather the long-term strategic projects, the three-year projects, are definitely something that should be evaluated. But the question is, when should evaluations begin? The first year has been completed in the three-year project, so it might be premature to start an evaluation now. Cheryl anticipated that by hiring additional staff the whole evaluation process could be assigned to staff. They could start the process of evaluation or follow-up in terms of how these projects are progressing, etc.

The recommendation is that the Commission refrain from looking for an outside evaluator at this time until the State Commission releases their statewide evaluation framework. It was also recommended to follow-up on statewide evaluation criterion by new additional staff members whose duties will include coordinating and facilitating local and statewide evaluation activities.

The State Commission is beginning their initial effort of data collection for long-term evaluation on a county-by-county basis and on a statewide basis. An appointment with the regional rep for evaluation and statewide evaluation is for the end of January 2003. At that time, a new person will be on board for these meetings.

The statewide evaluation will come up with some indicators throughout the state. But the Commission may chose to evaluate projects in a different way and there was discussion about the pros and cons of going to an outside evaluator as opposed to internal evaluation and/or the combination of both. Nothing has been agreed upon yet.

Many Education departments (state and nationally) advocate for both an outside and inside evaluator working together to find indicators that measure effectiveness. Evaluations are important to help develop a clear sense of what the funder wants early on. It was suggested that a timeline be developed showing what steps staff would be willing to take to begin the process.

D. Follow-up on Auditor's Recommendation:

When the outside auditor released findings to the Commission, one concern was a lack of backup documentation on support costs that were charged to the Commission. According to Dave Kelley, Assistant County Auditor, all departments are charged various indirect costs based upon the amount of time/energy the auditor's office spends to oversee the finances of that particular budget unit. This explanation still didn't satisfy the Commission so Jane Dolan and Cheryl Giscombe agreed to meet with county auditor staff to get a better explanation for the full Commission. The meeting hasn't happened yet.

E. Bylaws Revision Recommendations:

1. Bylaws Revision Recommendations:

There are two recommended changes to the Bylaws. These changes (denoted in bold, italic, underline) are:

Article 7, Finances

Section 1. Reimbursement shall be provided to Commission members **and Commission designated community members** for attendance at State Children and Families meetings, and other events pertaining to performance of Commission business.

Article 8, Rules of Order.

Section 1. ~~The Commission shall operate by consensus. In the event that consensus cannot be achieved, The Commission shall adhere to the most recent edition of ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER.~~ **Parliamentary procedures.**

Gary House made a motion to approve as amended, Article 7 and 8 of the Bylaws. Jane Dolan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Status of Alternate Commission Membership:

Appointing alternate members was discussed. There were times when a quorum was not present delaying work accomplished by the Commission. It was discussed to approach the board to appoint two alternate members to the Commission. These would be non-voting members when there is a full quorum. However, when a quorum is needed, they could step in. These alternates would be expected to attend every meeting and participate in the discussions.

In order to do this, the Commission needs to amend the County ordinance that set up the Commission because it doesn't address alternates as part of its membership. The alternate member additions were approved during the August 23, 2002 meeting. The full Commission is asked to direct the staff to prepare, with County counsel, an amendment to the County ordinance establishing alternate membership, and upon adoption of the amendment by the board, and amend the Bylaws concurrently.

Gary House made a motion to direct staff to seek an ordinance amendment to allow alternate memberships. Jane Dolan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

F. District Attorney and Board of Supervisors request for funds letter:

Mike Ramsey (Butte County DA) made a presentation to the Commission.

DEC (Drug Endangered Children) is a program that is a collaboration between the Department of Social Services, law enforcement, and the district attorney's office. It rescues children from drug environments. Butte County has a significant meth/drug problem. Recent statistics indicate Butte County is number one in terms of per capita for meth labs in the State of California. In 2001, 111 children were rescued from drug environments/homes. In 2002, the number rose to 183. Of the 183, approximately 40% were in the target age range for this Commission (0-5). Three years ago, 105 children were rescued. The parents swore they would do anything and everything to get their children back. Only 15 children were reunited with their parents; the rest were adopted out.

This program was started in 1993 by Sue Webber Brown. This program has given Butte County national publicity for being an innovative program to save children. Prior to 1993, narcotic officers would go into a home and were only concerned with seizing drugs and arresting the parents. The children were an afterthought. They would be given to family members or friends that were just as bad as the environment they were being rescued from.

The program had been funded by the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning grant since May 1999. However, the governor has cut DEC funding from the state budget, which means funding for the Butte County DEC program will end February 15, 2003.

The DA's office needs funding to help continue this program. To maintain the program at a minimum level, \$45,500 is needed for the period of February 15, 2003 through June 30, 2003, and more for annual funding effective 2003-2004. Since the state funding is going to end within a month, time is of the essence to find funding. The DA is actively looking for other sources of funding within the county.

There were three recommendations from the Administrative Committee:

1. Direct Commission staff to submit a response letter on behalf of Commission stating their intent to send a communication to Governor Davis regarding the Commission's dissatisfaction with recent blue-penciling of funds for DEC program. The local Prop 10 commission would ask the governor to reconsider funding for a particular program.
2. In response to their letter, suggest DA and BOS seek other funding sources within the county in order to serve the children outside the 0-5 ranges allowable under Prop 10 legislation.
3. Suggest re-submission of proposal for funding according to Policy, Criteria, and Procedures on Special Funding Requests.

Marian Gage made a motion to direct staff to write a letter back to the District Attorney to instruct them to respond to our policy for fund requests out of a formal process. Language also needs to state that the Commission's role isn't generally a sole funding source. Gary House seconded. Vote passed with 1 no, 6 ayes.

Item 5: Consent Calendar

A. Bylaws Revision Recommendations:

The following items were discussed at previous Commission meetings. Staff has identified them as having no opposition and presenting no new or unusual issues requiring the Commission's attention. Unless a member of the Commission requests discussion, this consent calendar will be voted on without discussion. Public comment will be allowed.

- A. Amendment to Bylaws: The Commission will add language on alternate membership, cost reimbursement for designated community membership participation in state and local

conferences and training workshops, and deletion of language related to Commission decision-making via consensus.

- B. First 5 Branding: The Commission will add the State Commission's branding to letterhead logo and will keep the current official name: Butte County Children and Families Commission.

Jane Dolan made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Gene Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6: Strategic Plan Committee Report

Gene Smith reported.

A. Funding Priority Recommendations:

During the December 18, 2002 committee meeting, the advisory group's recommendations for consideration in the strategic plan were discussed. Is there anything missing or is another process necessary? The Advisory Groups were asked to provide the Commission with a written concurrence statement signed by the Advisory Group's chair prior to the Commission's action on recommendations.

The Children's Services Coordinating Council and Child Abuse Prevention Council will provide concurrence letter to the Commission by February 17, 2003. The Tobacco Coalition will provide the letter by February 21, 2003. Heather Senske said the Local Child Care Planning Council will provide their concurrence letter by the end of February.

Committee members recommend the Commission consider specifying the intent to serve "all" children in the SP guiding principles, changing SP language to "indicators" and "objectives," and re-ranking SP priority areas after making a commitment to fund projects as follows for the next 10 years:

1. Project REWARDS (\$500,000 per year).
2. I&R & Systems development (\$100,000 per year).
3. School Readiness (\$300,000 per year).
4. Large grants (\$400,000 per year) (SP funding priorities for community grants.)
5. Mini-grants (\$100,000 per year) (SP funding priorities for community grants.)

It was brought up that in less than four years, based on these proposed funds, the reserves would begin to dwindle in order to keep up this funding.

From the SP perspective, the committee just wanted to throw out for consideration the idea of at least specifying some intent for sustainability. The numbers are similar to what has been committed currently, the intention is to fund at some sustainable measure the current initiatives. So the intent is to sustain current initiatives. The work being done on funding priorities right now would be the guide for any other funding left over--to help figure out how to fund things--and that money left over after sustaining the School Readiness and the REWARDS initiative would be designated for smaller mini-grants.

This was accepted for informational purposes. Feedback will be gathered from the advisory groups and then it will be developed into a more final form.

B. Timeline for Next Steps:

One of the recommendations is re-doing the voting on the priorities in the next two months (by the March meeting). A new list will need to be developed per these recommendations on the funding priorities.

Consultant Stephen Kaplan suggested this could be done between meetings and staff could aggregate it and present it to help expedite this process.

The original timeline developed by the advisory groups is no longer valid.

Item 7: Staff Report

Cheryl Giscombe reported. Four commissioners—Jane Dolan, Gene Smith, Mark Lundberg, and Sandra Machida—will see their terms expire in April 2003. All four have indicated their interest in serving another term. Commissioner Gary House is retiring from his position at the end of January 2003 and moving to Ogden, Utah. The board has made arrangements for an interim to serve until a permanent commissioner is chosen. Various members of the Commission expressed their admiration for Commissioner House, for all his hard work, leadership, and guidance, and that he will be missed.

The Program Manager recommended that the Commission consider reducing the number of yearly meetings from 10 to a minimum of four (as specified by the Bylaws and Ordinance) beginning with the April meeting which would start with new membership.

Another option would be to have six meetings (every other month), as opposed to 10, with the understanding that special meetings could be held in addition to the regular meetings if deemed necessary. The reason behind this recommendation is that with minimal staff, there is less than three weeks to not only prepare for the meetings but to do the work from the previous meeting and meet with all the different ad hoc committees, and in some cases, meet with advisory groups as well. Less meetings could be more efficient and maximize commissioners' time.

However, discussion was made that there might be problems with the decision-making process or getting a quorum together for quarterly meetings. The idea was attractive but felt to be too abrupt a change for the Commission and how they handle their business. No action was taken at this time on this recommendation.

Staff Development

A new Administrative Analyst II will join the Commission—Bobbi Dunivan. She's currently with the Butte County Department of Child Support Services as an ombudsman. She will begin her new position on January 21, 2003. Her primary job responsibility is contract scope of work monitoring, grantee TA support, and local/statewide evaluation efforts.

Financial Report

Eva Puciata reported. Recently, Commissioners were e-mailed the First 5 California Annual Report. There is a difference in the Commission's annual report revenue figures and those found in the State's annual report. That's because there's an allocation from fiscal year 00/01 in the Commission's figures that is not in the State's.

The FY 01-02 audit balance sheet has all of the fund balance termed "unreserved/undesignated." It would look better to have funds designated as "reserved for future use." To "reserve" funds on the balance sheet for FY 02-03, the Commission would have to make and pass a motion.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.